United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Baha'i International Community, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18825 (E) 121118

Please recycle

Statement

Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind

At one level, social protection may be conceived of as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability. A theme as weighty as providing social protection to all, particularly the most vulnerable-- the majority of whom are women and children-- must be considered in the light of a greater truth: that all of humanity is one, and all of humanity must benefit from the plentiful resources of our shared homeland. That all people have the right to lead lives of dignity, with opportunities to receive a quality education, to access healthcare, to practice their spiritual values, and to contribute their share to the well-being of their communities, through work, nurturing healthy families, and offering acts of service, should by now be an accepted truth.

Moreover, a clear implication of the oneness of humanity is that women and men are equal. The growing recognition of both oneness and the equality of women and men is a hallmark of the modern age-- and one that augurs well for the gradual emergence of a global civilization characterized by justice, reciprocity, and prosperity. Nevertheless, the full expression of oneness in every facet of life has yet to be realized; indeed, its realization may at times feel out of reach. That women and girls are often the hardest hit by the injustices engendered in the current ordering of society is unsurprising given the historical forces that have given rise to that order. While growing acceptance of the principle of oneness was one of the greatest legacies of the twentieth century, many of the ideological underpinnings of prevalent societal systems are premised on values that are antithetical to oneness. Ideals of exclusion, belief in the inherent superiority of some groups over others, and reliance on adversarialism as a means of achieving progress are coded into the very DNA of the structures of society. What follows, then, is that the principle of oneness cannot be grafted superficially onto these; the systems and structures of society must be remolded to embody oneness.

A critical question before a body as significant as the United Nations and the Member States that comprise it is how to draw on and release the capacities and collective powers of all the world's peoples, including, critically, women and girls. Beyond institutional implications, principles of oneness and equality call for profound changes at the level of culture. No one is free from the exacting demands of justice; all will be called upon to continuously re-examine their own attitudes, values, and relationships with others.

Addressing Economic Inequalities

As a result of social and cultural norms and inequalities, women experience stages of particular vulnerability throughout their life cycles. In many countries, women are much more likely than men to lose their income and fall into poverty. Even in the most economically advanced communities, women's reproductive roles have often meant they will not be afforded the same roles and responsibilities in the workforce as their male counterparts. There are many obstacles preventing women and girls from accessing public services and benefiting from strong infrastructure. Governance systems that promote collective security, environmental sustainability, and an equitable and just economic order are required to permanently remove them. Given their centrality to social protection, appropriate economic arrangements deserve special consideration.

Extreme concentrations of wealth have given rise to the distorted perception that the world lacks sufficient resources for all of its inhabitants. When considering how to bring all people out of poverty, there is an understandable temptation to focus on

the generation of wealth. Attention to growth and income generation alone has very often translated into more wealth for those who do not need it, and increased deprivation for those who do. Regulatory structures that allow small numbers to amass unconscionable amounts of material resources for themselves and their kin cannot be perpetuated. So long as economic models continue to disregard and externalize moral considerations, such as justice and trustworthiness, global financial instability will continue to rise, and all of humanity will struggle.

Indeed, around the world the consequences of environmental degradation are being felt. Yet economic paradigms in most industrialized countries treat environmental impact as an externality. This has given rise to the impoverishment of rural communities, the exploitation of vulnerable populations, and the rapid deterioration of the natural world. Promising new models are arising that consider questions of economics in light of planetary boundaries. These models should be investigated to determine their potential as well as their limits. Generally, the global community may wish to devote substantial resources towards understanding how economic models organized around principles of collective trusteeship, justice, and reciprocity can emerge and adapt to the needs of different communities.

Releasing the Powers of the Human Spirit

In communities around the world, a lack of material wealth has been an obstacle to attracting, training and retaining qualified teachers, and to erecting and maintaining educational facilities. Agenda 2030 emphasises strengthening public infrastructure as a means of providing education to all. While quality education does depend, to some degree, on a flow of material resources, the experience of many Baha'i communities at the grassroots suggests that even in the most remote and poverty-stricken areas of the world, there is a wealth of human resources that with time, attention, and the wise channelling of material means, can flourish.

When a community assesses the resources it does possess (for instance, the capacity of local inhabitants to identify challenges and consult upon solutions; the generosity of community members willing to donate time, talent, and materials to construct simple edifices and other provisions) limitations can give way to opportunities. Our experience has shown that initiating an educational process concerned with releasing the full range of human capacities does not need to be delayed until strong infrastructure is in place. A quality education requires attention to the entire educational process-- the training of the teachers, the selection or development of appropriate curricula, the creation of an environment that is conducive to learning, and the engagement of the community within which the learning process unfolds. These different dimensions can be supplemented and strengthened by material resources, to a degree. Yet, even more crucial is ensuring that teachers and students be involved in a process of capacity building that releases the powers of the human spirit.

The human spirit – which can be regarded in one sense as the collection of endowments that distinguish human beings from other species, including the human mind – has the capacity to know, to love, and to will. It is a force that has for too long been undervalued, and as such, humanity has been deprived of a limitless source of prosperity. Releasing its powers requires an education that would help children develop the skills and knowledge needed to both transform their characters and lead productive lives. This would include engagement with literature and the arts, scientific training, mastery of technical skills, ability to participate in individual and collective decision-making processes, and developing the capacity to identify needs and consult upon solutions. As their capabilities gradually develop and find expression in the community, there is a burgeoning of those arts, sciences, innovations, philosophies and ethics upon which civilization depends.

Creating the World Anew

The inability to provide social protection for women and girls at every stage of their lives is only one of the symptoms of an outdated social order. This requires that the current order be pushed to its limits through policy change, through the enactment of just legislation, and through measures to close the gaps of extreme inequalities. However, these changes, though necessary, will prove insufficient in bringing about the new patterns of life that will allow all people to thrive. Given that many of the systems and structures of society were designed precisely to reinforce domination and inequality, significant resources must also be channelled towards learning about effective models of governance, education, and economics structured around an entirely new set of principles: that human beings are one, that women and men are equal, that the emergent powers of the collective can be released through cooperation and reciprocity, and that humanity's progress will be greatly bolstered by the full participation of all people in creating the world anew.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 December 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Equality Now, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18827 (E) 071218

Please recycle

Statement

Equality Now, an international human rights organization with ECOSOC status, calls on all member states at the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women to continue their efforts to provide social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This requires member states ensure that laws are enacted and enforced that prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, ensure legal equality, and bar practices that are harmful to women and girls, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and sex trafficking. In addition, states must seek to ensure that women and girls have access to legal systems to seek justice and obtain redress for human rights violations.

One of the key requirements to providing the social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure necessary to empower women and girls is for governments to have a legal system supported by a strong rule of law that ensures gender equality and bars sexual and gender-based violence. For example, laws that hold technological companies accountable for failure to prevent sex trafficking and other forms of online sexual exploitation could create a powerful system for protecting women and girls from sexual violence. As noted in Equality Now's Report, Words & Deeds: Holding Governments Accountable in the Beijing +20 Review Process 2015, although there has been great progress made around the world to eliminate laws that discriminate against women and girls, far too many laws and policies still remain in effect that are insufficient, inconsistent and not systematically enforced, and sometimes, even promote violence against women and girls. Laws and policies that discriminate against women and girls, such as laws that ban pregnant girls from attending school or allow harmful practices like female genital mutilation and child marriage to occur, can have long-term impacts, including on women's ability to complete their education, obtain employment, and access social protections and public services, if they exist.

Even when laws are in place to protect the rights of women and girls, there are still barriers that prevent them from fully realizing their rights and accessing social protections and public services, especially in cases related to sexual violence. As noted in Equality Now's Report, Learning From Cases of Girls' Rights, adolescent girls are disproportionately vulnerable to human rights abuses. At the same time, girls generally lack a support system through which they can protest abuses and attempt to access justice. For example, girls who are victims of sexual violence are often at risk of being re-victimized through the legal system, such as in cases where they are met with dismissive and sexist attitudes from police, medical examiners, prosecutors, and judges. Delays in the legal system can also serve as a barrier for women and girls moving on with their lives. We have had cases where girls have waited for years to receive a final verdict, sometimes for over half of their lives. Another challenge can be found in rural areas, when the nearest criminal court is not always easily accessible to adolescent girls.

Ensuring that a country's legal system is designed to establish gender equality and provide access to justice for women and girls who have had their rights violated is essential to achieving SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions in the agreed upon sustainable development goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SDG 16 calls upon states to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In order to achieve these aims, it is important to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all (Target 16.3); significantly reduce all forms of

violence (Target 16.1); and by end[ing] abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children (Target 16.2).

We call upon member states to uphold their commitments to the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, including by devoting financial resources to prevention; by repealing or amending all sex discriminatory laws; and by ensuring that laws and policies give women and girls true protection from sexual violence and sexual exploitation and access to justice if gender-based violence, including harmful practices, is perpetrated.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Campaign Life Coalition, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18829 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

Campaign Life Coalition is a national, non-profit organization involved in political action and advocacy for legal and cultural change in Canada with respect to protecting human life and the natural family. It works in identifying and assisting pro-life and pro-family candidates to run for public office at all levels of government, promotes civic engagement at the grassroots level, and encourages voting based on principles, not party. Campaign Life Coalition is an accredited non-governmental organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council.

We call upon Member States at the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women to prioritize the human rights of women and girls through the development of more comprehensive social protection systems in the pursuit of authentic gender equality and the universal empowerment of women. Among the women of the world, pregnant women, especially those in crisis pregnancies, and the next generation of preborn girl children are increasingly accounted among the most vulnerable. As a result, they require special attention to ensure not only the protection of their most fundamental human rights but the realization of their fullest potential.

Section 5.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 5 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in order to achieve authentic gender equality and the universal empowerment of women and girls. Abortion, as the intentional destruction of a child in the womb, which is disproportionately the girl child, at the expense of the mother's physical, emotional and psychological well-being, is in direct violation of any efforts to secure such things. In addition, it further undermines efforts to eliminate maternal mortality, foster sustainable population development and increase social prosperity. In the same breadth, its rampant popularity perpetuates cultural devaluation of motherhood as well as the unique contributions that women make to society.

Contrary to the popular belief that women freely choose abortion, a recent study, published in the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, has found that almost three quarters (73.8 per cent) of women with a history of abortion that were surveyed admitted to having experienced at least subtle forms of pressure to abort their child. Of the 987 women that were surveyed, more than half (58.3 per cent) decided to abort their child in order to make others happy and nearly 30 per cent said that they were afraid that they would lose their partner if they did not choose to terminate their child. These are not the actions or motivations of empowered women living in the freedom of true gender equality. These are the actions of women who, finding themselves in the crux of a difficult situation, have felt that they had only one choice, which is, of course, no choice at all.

In another study, Theresa Burke and David Reardon, authors of Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion, state that as many as 60 per cent to 83 per cent of women undergoing abortion would have preferred to give birth, if their circumstances had been better. In other words, most women 'choose' to abort their children not in a spirit of freedom and liberty, but rather out of a sense of desolation, which is largely the result of a lack of social support networks and a lack of adequate attention to maternal health needs. It is, therefore, in the best interest of women, as well as their pursuit of empowerment and authentic freedom, that the Member States invest in social protection systems that guarantee the best outcome for both mother and child.

The difficulty of some pregnancies is dramatically increased by a person's circumstance. The vulnerability of a mother and child is affected by a variety of factors including poverty, state in life, social status, social security, cultural norms, conflict, availability of basic public services, access to adequate nutrition and maternal healthcare, as well as education. However, the solution to a difficult

pregnancy is not to eliminate the child, but rather to eliminate the factors that make it so difficult. Broad access to public services and sustainable infrastructure is integral to the empowerment of women across the globe as well as the assurance of security and wellbeing for both mothers and their children. To ensure the implementation of effective, responsive programs, we highlight the importance of South to South cooperation, especially as a means of ensuring culturally appropriate programming that respects the sovereignty of each and every nation.

Finally, the lack of availability of social protection systems and public services for expectant mothers, especially those in a crisis situation, betrays a cultural devaluation of motherhood. As a natural process that is intimately tied to the identity and personage of women around the world, motherhood maintains a special place of significance in the world and for the world. As a result of its inseparability from the woman's identity, as well as its natural importance, motherhood should be supported by society in a way that empowers women to both thrive as mothers as well as provide for those under their care. The mother should, by virtue of her innate value as an equal member of the human family, be entitled to the type of support that enables her to move forward with confidence while also circumventing any recourse to a means of provision that would prove damaging to either herself, her pre-born child or her family.

Calls to Action

We call upon Member States to enact effective, comprehensive social protection programs that suit maternal needs, without eliminating maternity. These programs should be responsible for creating social environments in which women are protected, empowered, informed and free from any forms of economic, social or cultural pressure that would obstruct their access to the kind of adequate public services that make it possible for both mother and child to live healthy, fulfilled lives.

We call upon Member States to create and support effective, comprehensive social protection systems that foster a culture of respect for mothers, regardless of their circumstances, social status, race or age. These systems should not only be attentive to the physical needs of the mother and her family, but should also consider their unique emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social needs. To this end, we highlight the importance of maternal education, public support for new and existing social support networks and women's aid groups, greater maternal support for women in the workplace and special social protection systems for single mothers.

We call upon Member States to encourage South to South Cooperation so as to increase the preservation and sharing of best practices in maternal education, support and accompaniment without the interference of ideologically driven investment or aid, which lends itself to the institutionalization of dependency, poverty and violence.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by International Relations Students' Association of McGill University, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18830 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

We, the International Students' Association of McGill, are a federally incorporated non-profit organization, established and operating at McGill University in Montréal, Canada. We are one of the few active student-run organisations with ECOSOC special consultative status on the global stage today. International Students' Association of McGill is an independent group at the University, comprised of a diverse cohort of McGill students. Volunteerism lies at the heart of International Students' Association of McGill. All of our programmes are executed by full-time students who devote precious hours and diligent effort to promoting student engagement in global affairs on our campus and in our respective local and international communities. Of particular note is International Students' Association of McGill's Junior Peacemakers initiative which offers elementary school students a globally-minded peace education through activities and discussion with intersectional approaches, in hopes of igniting their passion for change-making.

Through our many years of International Students' Association of McGill's consultative participation at the United Nations, it would be impossible for us to overstate our gratitude to the international community for the countless opportunities extended to us. The experiences and wealth of knowledge garnered by our delegates at the United Nations have propelled our pursuit for positive change.

International Students' Association of McGill recognizes, after a thorough examination of the priority theme for the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, that the challenges and inequalities facing women and girls are exacerbated by the inaccessible nature and lack of infrastructure in social protection and public service systems. International Students' Association of McGill appreciates the substantial progress and recognized importance of social protectionism through Target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which recommends nationally appropriate social protection measures and systems for all, including floors. Progress towards gender equality is hindered when social protection systems fail to adequately address the needs of women and girls and consider the unique social and political contexts of their challenges. In such a time where gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is at the forefront of the international agenda, it is paramount that we recognize the need for accessible and comprehensive solutions. Without a meaningful effort, women and girls will face further marginalization within the gender gap — particularly with regards to education and income insecurity, which perpetuate the vulnerability of women.

International Students' Association of McGill acknowledges that social protection programs must undergo a gender-based and intersectional analysis in constructing inclusive approaches that consider the varying lived experiences of those identifying as a woman or girl. The diversity and importance of each woman's experience must be accounted for and must be a priority for the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

International Students' Association of McGill is an organization that passionately engages with international relations. We celebrate the years of international progress achieved because of the United Nations and anticipate the opportunities for progress yet to come. International Students' Association of McGill will return to the Commission on the Status of Women this year seeking innovative solutions for women across the globe and looking to give a voice to the unique perspective we hold as the young leaders of our generation.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Centre for Public Health, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18945 (E) 131118

Please recycle

Statement

The Centre for Public Health is a national non-governmental not for profit organization in Nigeria, it is also registered in New York with 501c3 status. Centre for Public Health is an organization working to reduce the high mortality rates in the developing countries through advocacy, policy development/implementation and service deliveries. Centre for Public Health happily commends the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women for adopting the theme Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructures for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Centre for public health is on the fore front of raising national/global awareness about the Non-Communicable diseases (cancer, hypertension, diabetes, mental health). Increasing awareness of the preventive methods especially life style modification, increasing and enhancing access for people living with non-communicable diseases to non-communicable disease treatment and drugs.

Currently we are working to inform all women about cervical cancer, three hundred and twenty thousand (320,000) have been reached through the Door2Door initiative. Centre for Public Health is also providing cervical screening (Paps smear and Human papilloma virus test) to the women from 25 to 65 years. Increasing demand and provision for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine. We also support women with cervical cancer to have a quality life through treatment and palliative care.

We are also distributing non-communicable disease drugs to the people living with non-communicable diseases such as people with hypertension, diabetes through our health centres in the rural areas at no cost. These people have no access to non-communicable disease drugs.

Despite the fact that high income countries have shown that with successful and effective implementation of comprehensive cervical cancer prevention and control, incidence and deaths from the disease can be dramatically reduced (World Health Organization). Yet there are no such programs in the low- and middle-income countries where the 90 per cent of the cervical cancer deaths occur. Most of the women in these low- and middle-income countries have no access to the cervical cancer services which could have saved their lives nor the palliative care to help them manage pain and safeguard their quality of life (WHO).

On the foregoing we are advocating for inclusion of the Human Papilloma Virus vaccine in all the member state program of immunization, combined with compulsory cervical screening (Paps smear and Human Papilloma Virus test) for all women within the specified age range.

We are also advocating for compulsory Community Based Social Health Insurance Program as a tool to ensure equal access to health services, accessible, affordable and available quality health care.

18-18945

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by AIM Education & Research Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18946 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

An effective social protection system must not only be able to protect basic means of livelihood of its population, but should also provide good healthcare facilities, sanitation, water, energy, Infrastructure, education and training. Whether it is an underdeveloped, developing or developed economy of the world, in this context, each country should have a social protection system in place whereby implementation depends on the feasibility of such social protection systems which primarily rely on the political scenario and financial conditions prevailing in different nations.

In the process of developing different skills reducing poverty and inequality is an imperative. This is possible by building a resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable Industrialization and fostering innovation in technology. Focus should be on affordable and equitable access to all the natural and other resources available. The emphasis should be to move from agrarian based society to an industrial one.

When both men and women get educated and trained in diverse fields of activities only then can they become self-sufficient and self-reliant. If social protection systems fulfil the needs of the people, the economic growth shall accelerate. Governments of different nations need to formulate policies for social protection systems to work effectively and tailor made to suit the needs of the population.

No social protection system can work effectively and efficiently until and unless necessary funds are allocated for such purposes. Normally any country which has a robust collection of taxes is in a better position to spend for social protection schemes. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also contribute to this cause in addition to philanthropists, individuals and corporate houses. Many countries who invest in social protection systems are more successful economically. It is considered an investment in people and it provides help for self-development, thereby contributing to social growth, which is increasingly important for stability and peace in many countries.

Social security is not just a human right, systems that provide social protection lay the foundation for pro-poor and sustainable poverty reduction and they are key to attaining the millennium development goals of the United Nations. Statistics by the international labour organization have confirmed that basic protection is affordable, even in low-income countries, by setting up a sustainable system of social security. It is not just a matter of money.

The widespread incidence of HIV/AIDS and the large percentage of non-formal labour, for example, pose special challenges in developing countries. The international community has recognized the importance of social protection for sustainable poverty reduction and development. International organization such as the United Nations and the World Bank along with the G8, the EU and other countries have shown their willingness to step up support to developing countries and emerging economies in setting up appropriate systems to be adopted. Many nations share their experience with partner countries and assist them in implementing suitable and sustainable solutions.

Many developing and more advanced countries have already begun to establish social protection systems. Others are currently looking for advise on developing sustainable systems suited to their needs. These also include the increase provision of micro insurance and the extension of basic social protection programs. Basic social protection programs are playing an increasingly important role currently especially in context of the global food crisis. Above all, they help vulnerable sections of the

population, such as women, children and disabled or older people. Social protection for older people also poses a future challenge for developing and more advanced countries whose societies also face rapid demographic change.

Social health insurance provides fair, financed and equitable access to public health services for the whole population. Everybody must pay what they can afford; social capital is redistributed from the healthy to the sick, from the younger to the older generation from the employed to the jobless and from the better off to the more needy. An effective social protection system should lay emphasis on the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and provide affordable health care to one and all.

Access to public services would mean extending social health insurance to the informal sector. People outside the formal sector now, such as pensioners, the disabled and the poor are medically insured as well. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education shall promote lifelong learning opportunities for one and all. Both men and women should be given tertiary and technical education to strengthen their future.

Infrastructure is the set of structural elements that support day to day function and influences the direction of human society. Sustainable infrastructure refers to the designing, building and operating of these structural elements in ways that do not diminish the social economic and ecological processes required to maintain human equity, diversity and the functionality of natural systems.

Infrastructure is critical to sustainable community development; our future and well-being depends on a well-defined sustainable infrastructure. The infrastructure that is built today will shape tomorrow's communities. There are five key infrastructure areas that can be crucial to sustainable development: transportation, energy, land use planning, waste management and governance.

Equality, also known as sexual equality, is the state of equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making, and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations and needs, equally, regardless of gender.

Gender equality between men and women, entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs.

On a global scale, achieving gender equality also requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girls, including sex trafficking, femicide, wartime sexual violence and other forms of oppression tactics. Despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They have less access to property ownerships, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

Empowerment of women and girls is possible only if certain concrete measures are taken by providing clean water as girls in poor communities often miss school because of lack of clean water which they have to fetch after walking long distances everyday that is often dirty and dangerous to their health.

Millions of girls are subjected to abuse, child labour, trafficking, child marriage and other offences. Hence more and more women and girls need to be protected by

equipping them with skills and by offering training, education, counselling, medical care, small business loans and other programs that reach out to women and girls and help to end gender based violence. There are millions of girls who are below the poverty line and are therefore vulnerable to teen violence and other crimes. The educated women should reach out and try to influence the life of young girls in their respective communities by volunteering as a tutor or mentor.

Micro loans can be offered to hardworking and zealous women entrepreneurs, as this will enable them to secure their future and the funds can be recycled again and again to help more people and make a visible impact.

Nearly 2.6 million new-born around the world die every year due to ignorance and lack of knowledge. Similarly, millions of women die annually due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Most of the deaths in children can be curtailed or totally stopped by proper counselling as most of them die from preventable and treatable causes such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria.

Women empowerment means giving equal opportunities to women not only at home but also at workplaces and neighbourhoods. Suitable measures must be taken to encourage women to do what they have been abstained from doing over the years and give them the respect which they rightly deserve and thus restore their dignity.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18947 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

Social protection has been prominent on the global agenda, particularly since the inclusion of social protection systems under Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 1.3, Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, and Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 5.4, Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies. While social protection policies and mechanisms played important role in alleviating poverty, measures that take into account the power dynamics within households and communities are needed for social protection policies and programmes to properly address gender inequality in a transformative way (Policy in Focus No. 38-Social protection: towards gender equality).

Social protection policies and programmes often apply one-size-fits all model and do not adequately integrate gender dimension into their design and implementation. Often the age dimension is missing as well, with programmes broadly targeting women and children and not reaching adolescent girls and young women thereof robbing them of a chance for a better future.

In many societies, women and girls do not enjoy the same access to public services, such as healthcare, education, transportation, as men and boys, or these are not safe for them to use. They also perform disproportionately large share of work in informal sector and unpaid care leaving them without access to social protection and public services.

Social protection and access to public services are essential for empowerment of women and girls. As the world's largest movement for every girl and any girl, with 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 150 countries, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts is concerned about the lack of gender dimension in design of social protection and public services, and more broadly, in systemic violation of girls' and women's human rights. We call on UN Member States to demonstrate strong political will, genuine commitment and invest resources to create mechanisms that effectively protect and empower women and girls, and lead to gender equality. This statement also includes challenges and solutions shared by girls and young women from around the world.

Girls' and Women's Access to Social Protection Programmes and Public Services

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty, inadequate health care, and lack of access to education and decent job opportunities. They also traditionally have more limited access to resources like land, credits and perform disproportionate share of unpaid work. Due to structural inequalities women are often concentrated in informal employment in low-skilled and low paid jobs, which by definition is work with no access to social protection (Overseas Development Institute Working paper 435. Informality, women and social protection: identifying barriers to provide effective coverage, 2016).

Many social protection programmes, including cash transfers, safety-net oriented public works programmes and others, target women and girls as main beneficiaries (FAO, Rural Transformations Information Note #2. Social protection and women's empowerment). Yet, this does not automatically lead to empowerment and well-being of women and girls. While social protection has great potential for promoting women's and girls' empowerment and reducing gender inequality, too often social protection policies and programmes fail to integrate gender dimension into their design and implementation.

Even when women's and girls' resources are increased through social protection programmes, lack of empowerment can exclude women and girls from the decision-

making processes in the family and management of these resource, as well as can affect household power dynamics and traditional roles of men as breadwinners, which can lead to incidents of violence.

Access to public services by women and girls varies across the world. While availability of accessible public services might differ from community to community, a common thread found in most of communities is that girls and young women often do not feel safe accessing public services, or services are not tailored to their needs. In areas where public services, such as water supply are not available, the burden of providing water for households still falls disproportionately on women and girls, especially in rural areas.

Recommendation

Social protection programmes cannot achieve women's and girls' empowerment in isolation. Unless the programmes take into account specific needs of women and girls, the complex social systems, social norms and power structures surrounding them, the effectiveness of these efforts will be undermined.

- Social protection schemes must be designed through an integrated approach, linking with other community interventions, social services and gender equality strategies, so that these can lead to sustainable solutions.
- Governments and local authorities must ensure girls' and women's participation in the design of social protection programmes to ensure they are gender-sensitive and needs-based.
- Governments must recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility as outlined in target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goal 5. Informal work, such as domestic and care work must be recognized and included in the pension system.
- Governments must take serious measures to tackle the discriminatory perceptions and expectations around girls' and women's role in the society. Gender equality starts with valuing girls and upholding their basic human rights.
- Governments and employers need to guarantee paid maternity leave and invest in free or subsidized child care, in particular with comprehensive array of support services offered to teenage mothers.
- Interventions need to ensure provision of age-appropriate services, as well as improve dissemination of youth-friendly information about available public services.
- Governments need to invest into gender impact evaluation to track long-term impact of these programmes on women across the life cycle.

Understanding Intersection Between Social Protection and Violence against Women and Girls

Across the world, violence against women and girls remains one of the most flagrant and most tolerated human rights violations. Women and girls who find themselves in situations of violence, are more vulnerable to social and economic risks. They are also disproportionately affected by poverty, inadequate health care, and lack of access to quality education.

Social norms and economic violence often restrict women's and girls' mobility and decision-making, as well as their access to education and employment. These limitations create greater barriers to social protection benefits for women and girls. Ensuring survivors of gender-based violence benefit from social protection programs requires careful consideration of their unique needs and circumstances.

Girls and women are often reluctant to report being attacked and harassed out of fear of being ostracized by their community and family and having no faith in institutions that are supposed to protect them. Often there are no services where they can go for support or information in the community, or information about the existing services is not widely available.

Girls and young women often do not feel safe accessing public services. Out of 7,000 respondents of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts survey conducted via U-Report, 71 per cent of girls and young women said sexual harassment against girls is a problem in their school, college or university; 53 per cent said the threat of sexual harassment distracts or makes them avoid studying or taking part in school activities; 52 per cent said fear of harassment makes them avoid public transport or public places.

The underlying ideologies of male superiority and discriminatory social norms legitimize different manifestations of discrimination and violence against girls and women both in the private and public domain. There are many norms and expectations around the types of work done by women and men, girls and boys; about the value of women's work and the value of girls' education. These continue to shape the unequal status and role of girls and young women in the society and affect their access to available services. Girls' opportunities need to be unconstrained by stereotypes and harmful social norms.

Recommendation

- Governments and local authorities should take strong measures through organising public awareness campaign and prevention education that address unequal power relations between boys and girls, men and women, and which condone discrimination and violence. These should be closely linked with social protection schemes targeting women and girls.
- Governments need to invest in data collection efforts to understand the nature and scale of violence against women and girls to inform the design of social protection programmes.
- Governments and service providers need to ensure that gender-based violence is carefully considered in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social protection programmes.
- Robust support mechanisms for survivors, including practical and emotional support, as well as improved access to justice need to be guaranteed by the Governments and local authorities. In particular, the needs of girl survivors of violence must be ensured by providing services, programmes and responses that take into account the best interests of the child.
- Bold and concerted actions by Governments, civil society and business sector are needed to challenge and transform the harmful norms through a combination of legislative reforms, national awareness raising campaigns and educational programmes for both bos nd girls.
- Human rights, gender equality and healthy relationships education should be integrated into school curricula to tackle the ideologies of male superiority, as well as increase girls' awareness and understanding of their rights.

Social protection policies and programmes can be powerful tools for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as attainment of the sustainable development goals.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18948 (E) 121118

Please recycle

Statement

Comprehensive universal social protection, access to public services such as physical and academic education, and sustainable civil and social infrastructure such as safe arts and athletic centres are necessary for the empowerment of women and girls.

Social protection is a human right. Therefore women, men, and all genders should receive equal social protection, regardless of employment and other factors. Demanding financial compensation in exchange for social protection that is often complicated, incomprehensive, and increases in quality with price widens socio-economic gaps in civil society. We see this in the state of women dancers and artists worldwide today. Lack of or subpar social protection makes it harder for women to reach their highest potential.

The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory Foundation makes the following recommendations in regards to securing social protection systems for gender equality:

Comprehensive universal social protection

- including women organizers
- with special regard to the reproductive, cultural, and social needs of women and girls
- with special regard to the nature of women's professions and lifestyles from mental rehabilitation to physical injury coverage
- free of discrimination in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, class, employment and other identifying labels
- free of charge or at a very low fee determined by respective societal minimum wages

Access to public services is necessary for women to thrive. Many women are kept in the private sphere, while men dominate the public sphere. For example, women and girls generally have less opportunity to partake in physical sport and activity. Giving women access to such public services empowers them by increasing their abilities, self-confidence, and credibility on the road to equality.

The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory Foundation makes the following recommendations in regards to securing access to public services for women's empowerment:

- Free public education
- including academic and physical education
- with high-quality physical education for girls and women
- including women teachers
- free of sexual harassment and abuse
- with additional, optional private academic and physical opportunities

Sustainable infrastructure provides women the security often lacking in the private sphere. For example, a safe, accessible athletic or arts centre dance studio may be the solace and professional accelerator for a woman or girl with an unequal home life. Creating and modifying infrastructure with women in mind will create gender-inclusive communities where women are equal.

The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory Foundation makes the following recommendations in regards to sustainable infrastructure for women's empowerment:

Sustainable civil and social infrastructure

- including athletic and arts centres
- free of sexism, racism, and other harmful biases disempowering women and girls
- with proper safety measures in place to protect women and girls
- including women administrators
- in accessible locations with accessible transportation and hours of operation

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18949 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

We welcome the theme of 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Social Protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Our extensive work on gender equality with focus on upholding women and young girls' sexual and reproductive right in 17 countries in the Asia Pacific in the last 25 years, resonates the theme in terms of relevance and urgency to address existing gender inequality and other systemic barriers in the region and globally. A fundamental component of achieving gender inequality, is the control of and undermining women's sexual and reproductive rights. If every woman does not have the right and autonomy to make decisions regarding her body and sexuality, she is unable to decide on the course of her life, her potential remains underutilized, she is pushed further into poverty, is at risk of a host of health implications such as unwanted pregnancies, poor health outcomes over the lifecycle, and increased negative impact on overall wellbeing. Therefore, the full realization of sexual and reproductive right as an integral to achieving gender equality and empowerment. We acknowledge the Universal Health Coverage and the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights targets within the SDG 3 and 5 as opportunities to take forward the priority theme for this year Commission on the Status or Women.

Asia-Pacific is a home to 60 per cent of the world's population, with women and girls constituting at least half of it and with about 50 per cent of the population living in rural areas. Despite that gender equality has featured in various development agenda at the international and national levels, it is far from achieved. Among gender issues, one that is least addressed in women and young girls' sexual and reproductive right. This is also evidenced by the high prevalence of harmful traditional practices such as early, child and forced marriages, and female genital mutilation. The harmful traditional practices pose great health risks to young mothers, and evidence also suggests adolescent pregnancy is associated with low educational attainment and lower socio-economic status.

The region is facing the highest maternal mortality in the world due to high fertility rate as a result of unmet need of contraception; unsafe abortion; and inaccessible and unaffordable health services. This is further exacerbated by weak, inefficient and under-resourced (financial, human and infrastructure) health systems that do not prioritise acceptable, available, accessible and quality sexual and reproductive health and rights. High out-of-pocket expenditure, unregulated privatization of health, including unaffordable health insurance result in a denial of services to the most marginalised. For women and girls' access to contraception is also a huge challenge resulting in unintended pregnancies. At least 60 per cent of the people in the Asia-Pacific have no effective social protection despite progressive move with laws and policies to protect social protection in the region. While some countries such as Bangladesh and India, have improved maternity health coverage, others such as China, Brunei, extended tax-funded schemes to achieve universal health coverage for older persons.

However, progress is uneven and coverage of sexual and reproductive health and rights within the social protection system incomprehensive and extremely limited. The social protection programmes in the region have not taken into consideration gender perspectives and sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. While the focus is primarily on maternal health, access to contraception, services for pregnancy related complications and safe abortion fall out of the system making women and girls vulnerable to pregnancy related deaths and morbidities. Additionally, Out of Pocket or self-financing is the largest source of healthcare

financing in South Asia. This has been both regressive and iniquitous, especially for poorer households at the threshold of subsistence.

Within this, sexual and reproductive health services, specially abortion services are among the most privatised services for women. Women in Asia experience high le els of unintended pregnancy and abortion remains the only means to exercise the right to decide on whether or not women want children, and number and spacing of children. Nearly two thirds of unintended pregnancies end in abortion and 36 abortions occur each year per 1000 women aged 15–44 years in the region. A third of total abortions are unsafe. Unsafe abortion places undue burden on women's health and wellbeing leading to preventable death and disabilities.

With increasing trends in migration, from rural to semi/urban areas, especially amongst women and young girls for better opportunities and mostly within informal and industrial sectors, the violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the urban settings is increasing while their access to services is shrinking due to limited mobility, finance and overall awareness of such services. Nowadays, cities and semi urban spaces have better public facilities, such as health care services, lighted streets, public transportation, public toilets, parks, and other public spaces. However, there is still a lack of safe, inclusive, accessible and quality public spaces for women and girls. For instance, sexual and gender-based violence such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape and trafficking of women and girls in the cities is increasing.

Further to this, in many countries in Asia, as stated earlier the prevalence of child, early and forced marriages is rampant. Fertility rates are higher in settings where early marriage is prevalent among rural girls compared to those living in urban areas. These harmful traditional practices pose great health risks to young mothers. Evidence also suggests adolescent pregnancy is associated with low educational attainment and lower socio-economic status.

Young girls are more vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health related issues due to taboo and stigma attached to adolescent sexuality resulting in services that are not youth-friendly. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the states should ensure that women's and girls' sexual reproduction rights is at the central of development agenda.

Recommendations

We call on the states to:

- Uphold their commitments to fully implement the sustainable development goals, underscoring the need for full realisation of Goals 3 and 5 — on health and gender equality. We strongly feel that the principles and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo International Conference on Population & Development, 1994) and the Beijing Platform for action in addition to other human rights treaties are critical to attaining the sustainable development goals and ensuring accountability.
- Ensure that health is a human right provided to all, including the marginalised and that sexual and reproductive health and rights is integrated within it and considered integral to achieving healthcare for all.
- Carry out constitutional obligations to adequately resource and provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights that are acceptable, accessible, affordable, and of quality for all women and girls.
- States should ensure a Continuum of Quality Care across a woman's lifecycle and in ensuring their rights — from preconception and pregnancy, to postpartum/ post-abortion and menopause, and across various locations, e.g., home,

community, and health facilities — is important to reduce adolescent, maternal, new born, and child mortality and morbidity and improve women's reproductive health.

- Address unmet need for all sexual and reproductive health information and services including contraception for marginalised women, including rural women, poor women, young and unmarried women and girls, and women living with disabilities by providing comprehensive sexuality education and quality sexual and reproductive health services including youth-friendly health services, modern contraception, access to safe abortion services, irrespective of their marital status and reach out especially to women in rural areas.
- Recognise all women and girl's right to safe abortion as a human right by all parties. Where illegal, decriminalise abortion, and where legal, remove conditionality and restrictions in abortion law in the region and ensure that legal uncertainty and bureaucracy is addressed in instances where legalisation has been achieved.
- States must provide adequate financial, human and infrastructural resources towards implementing health policies, which ensures highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for all including their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Regulate the private health sector to provide acceptable, affordable, accessible, quality health services and ensure dignity and respect, privacy and confidentiality.
- Lastly, improve public investment in health and develop social protection systems and health strategies to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive right for all women, specially the marginalized and vulnerable groups. The investment should also be made on disaggregated data for monitoring and strengthening policies and programmes.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18975 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

States in Asia Pacific on average use 7.4 per cent of their GDP for public social protection expenditure, with countries like India spending as little as 1.4 per cent (2015 data). Asia Pacific has a high gender pay gap, with some sub regions such as South Asia seeing the wage gap increase in the last few years. The bulk of care and domestic work, which is usually an invisible and unaccounted contribution to national economies, continues to be shouldered by women. Strong social protection systems can be an effective mechanism for improving gender equality, when they are geared towards reducing these inequalities. States must invest in gender responsive, quality public services, universal social protection systems, and sustainable infrastructure, if they want to meet commitments under CEDAW and Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda.

This submission elaborates on how to bridge the gap in social protection by moving away from the neoliberal economic approach, and how to close gaps in the sources of finance by addressing illicit flows and increasing international cooperation on tax. It also gives examples of participatory and democratic approaches to public service delivery that are essential to realising gender equality.

Challenging the global economic order

The overarching barrier to financing public services - particularly for global south nations and small economies, but also for the world's richest nations - is the neoliberal economic order and the current form of capitalism that persists in the illusion of a trickle down distribution of wealth, and in reality has contributed to the increase in inequality worldwide.

In the past few decades, international finance institutions and global north countries have pressed for deregulation, privatisation, and cuts to public funding, often under the guise of austerity measures. States have sold key assets to the private sector or set up public-private partnerships that result in poor quality public services. In order to correct this, states and financial institutions must accept that capitalism is incompatible with the delivery of universal, gender-responsive, quality services. Delivering clean water and safe sanitation, for example, will never be a profit-making venture, but is recognised by CEDAW as an essential element for women to enjoy the right to adequate living conditions. It cannot be handed over to a corporation that will maximise profit at the cost of health and universal delivery.

Reforming this economic system and approach to development is vitally necessary if states wish to realise the 2030 Agenda. Based on the latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and persistent reports on the concentration of the world's wealth to less than one per cent of its population, it is evident that globally we are moving backwards on Goal 10 and 13, which will impact all other goals and create deeper challenges to achieving gender equality. Additionally, increased conflict and rise in climate events has resulted in more refugees and internally displaced persons, a majority of whom are hosted in the global south, who are often excluded from social protection systems.

States need to be bold in rejecting the dominant economic model and take steps such as renationalising assets such as railways, remunicipalising public services such as water and sanitation, and introducing measures for accountability and transparency. States in Asia Pacific should take cognizance of regional civil society's persistent demands for Development Justice, a framework that demands all public policy be guided by the need for gender and social justice, environmental justice, redistributive justice, economic justice and accountability to the people.

Financing gender responsive public services and social protection systems

In a world where corporations make up 69 out of the top 100 economies, the financing of public services and robust social protection systems is a challenge for developing countries. The revenue required can be met by eliminating illicit financial flows, which is estimated to be ten times the size of all development assistance. International cooperation for ending money laundering, bribery, tax evasion, trade mispricing and other financial crimes is necessary as these deprive governments of revenues needed for social protection and public services.

A vital component for addressing tax evasion is transparency. For states to be able to clearly understand large scale tax evasion by transnational corporations, a mandatory requirement for country by country reporting of taxes is necessary in the short term. In the long-term, states can benefit from establishing a global tax body to oversee and guide on this issue.

At the national level, states need to integrate a participatory approach to budgeting so that ministries of finance do not structure national budgets without an understanding of the needs of each department. Government machineries have a siloed approach which needs to be broken to develop cohesive strategies for delivering gender responsive quality public services.

Structuring inclusive, universal, gender-responsive social systems, infrastructure and public services

The delivery of public services that are universal in access and coverage requires integrating a diverse range of approaches. Electrical coverage via a national grid cannot reach a range of geographic areas (deltas, mountains, deserts), and tend to be limited in remote rural areas and small island states. In such areas, systems of energy democracy can be adopted via micro or nano grid renewable energy structures that are community-owned and rely on peer-to-peer sharing of energy. Existing examples of such projects are successful in increasing electrical coverage in remote areas as well as being part of the shift to a zero-carbon future.

States must also take steps to ensure that employment conditions of agencies delivering public services meet the four pillars of decent work. In South Asia, the practice of manual scavenging persists, where sewage and septic tanks are cleaned by workers without safety gear, with estimates of one of these workers dying every five days in India. Workers in these sectors deserve a living wage and safe conditions of work, a consideration that is especially important in countries where cleaning and sanitation work is delegated to minority groups, including on religious and caste basis.

Infrastructure projects, such as highways, bridges, and dams, cannot be initiated without several stages of consultation. Firstly, the real needs of communities need to be assessed: for remote villages lacking access to the nearest clinic or school, the priority is not building a massive bridge that shortens the distance between the capital and the nearest seaport; it should be a viable, affordable mode of public transport. For a community that does not have access to electricity, the solution is not to displace entire villages to set up a mega dam. Prior and informed consent, meaningful impact assessments, and public hearings are integral to building infrastructure that meets the needs of the people, and inclusive of people with disabilities.

Importance of democratic governance and commitment to human rights

All of the measures outlined in this submission become increasingly difficult to deliver as the quality of democracy is challenged globally and authoritarians do their best to consolidate power, often by fomenting conflict. Democratic governance and

recognition of the social contract is essential if states are to succeed in introducing robust, inclusive and gender-responsive social protection systems. The region currently faces several state-sanctioned large-scale acts of violence, including ethnic cleansing, and targeting of indigenous or religious minority communities.

Smaller examples, such as people being arrested for using social media to criticise government livestock subsidies, demonstrate that undemocratic governments who deliberately and actively violate human rights cannot be expected to and will not introduce national social protection floors or universal public services.

Recommendations:

- Commit to the framework of gender-responsive quality public services which are universal in access and coverage, publicly funded, and have measures for transparency and accountability;
- Commit to building inclusive and robust social protection systems that at minimum provide: child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment support, employment and injury benefits, sickness benefits, healthcare, old-age benefits, invalidity/disability benefits and survivors' benefits;
- Cooperate to combat illicit financial flows, and follow measures to increase taxation on multinational corporations instead of increasing taxes on low income brackets;
- Reject austerity measures, dismiss the economic growth centred model, and instead increase spending on public goods and use gender-responsive methods in all national budgeting processes.
- Conduct ex-ante, periodic and ex-post human rights, gender and environmental impact assessments of economic policies, including those generated by trade, investment or other financial agreements.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Women Graduates — USA, Inc., a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18976 (E) 191118

Please recycle

Statement

Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

The world is facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis since the Second World War. According to a new report from the United Nations the number of refugees and people displaced by conflict and disaster worldwide has reached a record high of 68.5 million. Across the globe, nearly 50 million children have been uprooted. Among them are 28 million fleeing brutal wars in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and South Sudan and 6.3 million migrant and refugee children in Latin America and the Caribbean fleeing violence and seeking to reunite with family members. Refugees and migrant women and children are at particular risk for human trafficking as a result of their vulnerable status, the devastating losses they have experienced, and their precarious life situations until durable solutions become available. According to the United National High Commissioner for Refugees, trafficking risks for refugees are at an ever-increasing level worldwide.

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Sustainable Development Goal 5)

According to the United Nations, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. But this does not apply to women and children refugees who are often treated as disposable people, pawns in larger political games or the unwanted refuse of intractable conflict. Women and children make up the majority of the world refugees. They are left behind or flee when men become combatants or are killed in conflict situations. Children alone make up half of the people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and children separated from parents or traditional caregivers are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of risks. Forcibly displaced women face barriers to securing economic livelihoods, discrimination in many forms, sexual violence, limited access to service and negative consequences from some cultural practices. The distinctive protection challenges and risks that women face as refuges are vulnerable factors for human trafficking.

Women Graduates — USA Inc. believes access to social protection systems and public services is imperative to reduce the problem of trafficking risk of migrants and refugees. Assistants to woman refugees would include specific measures to prevent individuals from falling into the hands of human traffickers. Whether in a camp setting or in an urban situation, those responsible for providing protection and assistance should undertake a mapping of populations at risk within the broader refugee population. Women should have education programs for refugees, to inform them of the risks of trafficking and how they can be reduced. Programs intended to expand economic opportunities are a critical anti-trafficking measure. Clearly, the best way to reduce trafficking risk for refugees is to provide a durable solution-one that offers permanence, legal status, safety and means of economic support. It's It is critical for greater collaboration and information-sharing between those working on refugee protection and assistance and those working on human trafficking. Each sector needs to be educated about the risks each population faces and where these risks intersect.

Peace, justice and strong institutions (Sustainable Development Goal 16)

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development provide access to justice for all is a challenge for women and children. War creates trafficking victims. Zones of conflict are characterized by a lack of basic human security, where lawlessness rules. Women and children are physically unprotected from the violence of combatants and non-combatants alike and have no legal protection or remedies because of the absence of law enforcement and the dysfunction of legal systems.

Among the distinctive protection factors and challenges that increase human trafficking risks for women and children are: physical insecurity; social economic and political marginalization; victimization by smugglers facilitating refugee movement; experience with sexual violence; social or other negative consequences resulting from sexual violence; pressure to engage in survival sex; severe disruptions to family structure; and lack of legal protection. Refugees are often treated as commodities in the political negotiations between nations-states, unwelcome wherever they land after desperate flight. As a subject within a border flow of human migration, refugees are subject to dehumanizing practices and curtailment of their rights by border enforcement practices intended to discourage migration, and curtail migrant rights, unwelcome wherever they land after desperate flight.

The distinctive protection challenges and risks that woman face as refugees are vulnerable factors for human trafficking. At the heart of the solution is to recognize and support the recognition of and support for refugees' talents, strengths and agency. Women Graduates — USA, Inc believes that when refugees are able to participate in protection solutions, peace-making, to contribute to the societies they join, and to support their families, the risk of being trafficked is reduced. Partnering with refugees and refugee communities in a meaningful way to identify and implement solutions is the best way to provide protection that addresses actual needs. At each point in the migration passage, it is imperative that improved systems are put into place to identify and offer legal protections to women and children who are victims of human trafficking. At border crossings and in-migrant communities, refugees who go unidentified run the risk of falling into the hands of criminal predators. True legal protection requires that nations provide a protective status under the law, offering the means for individuals to access such protection. Border enforcement policies and Migration control should increase the number of women enforcement agents, especially when unarmed, who are less threatening while carrying out enforcement policies and migration control balanced by mechanisms for ensuring the protection of the most vulnerable in serious risk of falling into the hands of traffickers.

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goal 17) is included to assure that countries and organizations cooperate instead of compete. Developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial support is seen as critical to overall success of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is essential to reduce human trafficking, a150.2 billion dollar a year illegal industry. Woman and girls make up 75 per cent of the 68.5 million people trapped in human trafficking worldwide. Women refugees and trafficked women share characteristics of poverty, marginalization and powerlessness. In a world increasingly characterized by the complex developments of globalization and increased migration, multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential for sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, finance and relevant data to ensure a comprehensive international approach is used in the protection of women and children.

In the last two years, a new partnership has emerged in response to the greatest increase in the number of migrants and refugees since the second World War. Women Graduates — USA, Inc. supports the final drafts of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration completed in July 2018 to be voted on by the United Nations Member States in December 2018. This plan supports shared responsibility among Member States to increase resettlement sites throughout the world within three years, expedite more consistent processing rules, facilitate family reunification, and increase protection strategies. Women Graduates — USA, Inc. believes the focus on pathways to resettlement includes increased educational at all levels through greater cooperation between education institutions and governments, and a concentrated effort to identify employment skills to enhance labor mobility. Increasing educational and employment opportunities prevents vulnerabilities to violence, slavery and trafficking while reducing economic dependency. For more effective pathways to resettlement there remains the need for greater cooperative and collaborative partnerships among national governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Baha'i International Community, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18977 (E) 191118

Please recycle

Statement

Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind

At one level, social protection may be conceived of as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability. A theme as weighty as providing social protection to all, particularly the most vulnerable — the majority of whom are women and children — must be considered in the light of a greater truth: that all of humanity is one, and all of humanity must benefit from the plentiful resources of our shared homeland. That all people have the right to lead lives of dignity, with opportunities to receive a quality education, to access healthcare, to practice their spiritual values, and to contribute their share to the well-being of their communities, through work, nurturing healthy families, and offering acts of service, should by now be an accepted truth.

Moreover, a clear implication of the oneness of humanity is that women and men are equal. The growing recognition of both oneness and the equality of women and men is a hallmark of the modern age — and one that augurs well for the gradual emergence of a global civilization characterized by justice, reciprocity, and prosperity. Nevertheless, the full expression of oneness in every facet of life has yet to be realized; indeed, its realization may at times feel out of reach. That women and girls are often the hardest hit by the injustices engendered in the current ordering of society is unsurprising given the historical forces that have given rise to that order. While growing acceptance of the principle of oneness was one of the greatest legacies of the twentieth century, many of the ideological underpinnings of prevalent societal systems are premised on values that are antithetical to oneness. Ideals of exclusion, belief in the inherent superiority of some groups over others, and reliance on adversarialism as a means of achieving progress are coded into the very DNA of the structures of society. What follows, then, is that the principle of oneness cannot be grafted superficially onto these; the systems and structures of society must be remolded to embody oneness.

A critical question before a body as significant as the United Nations and the Member States that comprise it is how to draw on and release the capacities and collective powers of all the world's peoples, including, critically, women and girls. Beyond institutional implications, principles of oneness and equality call for profound changes at the level of culture. No one is free from the exacting demands of justice; all will be called upon to continuously re-examine their own attitudes, values, and relationships with others.

Addressing Economic Inequalities

As a result of social and cultural norms and inequalities, women experience stages of particular vulnerability throughout their life cycles. In many countries, women are much more likely than men to lose their income and fall into poverty. Even in the most economically advanced communities, women's reproductive roles have often meant they will not be afforded the same roles and responsibilities in the workforce as their male counterparts. There are many obstacles preventing women and girls from accessing public services and benefiting from strong infrastructure. Governance systems that promote collective security, environmental sustainability, and an equitable and just economic order are required to permanently remove them. Given their centrality to social protection, appropriate economic arrangements deserve special consideration.

Extreme concentrations of wealth have given rise to the distorted perception that the world lacks sufficient resources for all of its inhabitants. When considering how to bring all people out of poverty, there is an understandable temptation to focus on the generation of wealth. Attention to growth and income generation alone has very often translated into more wealth for those who do not need it, and increased deprivation for those who do. Regulatory structures that allow small numbers to amass unconscionable amounts of material resources for themselves and their kin cannot be perpetuated. So long as economic models continue to disregard and externalize moral considerations, such as justice and trustworthiness, global financial instability will continue to rise, and all of humanity will struggle.

Indeed, around the world the consequences of environmental degradation are being felt. Yet economic paradigms in most industrialized countries treat environmental impact as an externality. This has given rise to the impoverishment of rural communities, the exploitation of vulnerable populations, and the rapid deterioration of the natural world. Promising new models are arising that consider questions of economics in light of planetary boundaries. These models should be investigated to determine their potential as well as their limits. Generally, the global community may wish to devote substantial resources towards understanding how economic models organized around principles of collective trusteeship, justice, and reciprocity can emerge and adapt to the needs of different communities.

Releasing the Powers of the Human Spirit

In communities around the world, a lack of material wealth has been an obstacle to attracting, training and retaining qualified teachers, and to erecting and maintaining educational facilities. Agenda 2030 emphasises strengthening public infrastructure as a means of providing education to all. While quality education does depend, to some degree, on a flow of material resources, the experience of many Baha'i communities at the grassroots suggests that even in the most remote and poverty-stricken areas of the world, there is a wealth of human resources that with time, attention, and the wise channelling of material means, can flourish.

When a community assesses the resources it does possess (for instance, the capacity of local inhabitants to identify challenges and consult upon solutions; the generosity of community members willing to donate time, talent, and materials to construct simple edifices and other provisions) limitations can give way to opportunities. Our experience has shown that initiating an educational process concerned with releasing the full range of human capacities does not need to be delayed until strong infrastructure is in place. A quality education requires attention to the entire educational process — the training of the teachers, the selection or development of appropriate curricula, the creation of an environment that is conducive to learning, and the engagement of the community within which the learning process unfolds. These different dimensions can be supplemented and strengthened by material resources, to a degree. Yet, even more crucial is ensuring that teachers and students be involved in a process of capacity building that releases the powers of the human spirit.

The human spirit — which can be regarded in one sense as the collection of endowments that distinguish human beings from other species, including the human mind — has the capacity to know, to love, and to will. It is a force that has for too long been undervalued, and as such, humanity has been deprived of a limitless source of prosperity. Releasing its powers requires an education that would help children develop the skills and knowledge needed to both transform their characters and lead productive lives. This would include engagement with literature and the arts, scientific training, mastery of technical skills, ability to participate in individual and

collective decision-making processes, and developing the capacity to identify needs and consult upon solutions. As their capabilities gradually develop and find expression in the community, there is a burgeoning of those arts, sciences, innovations, philosophies and ethics upon which civilization depends.

Creating the World Anew

The inability to provide social protection for women and girls at every stage of their lives is only one of the symptoms of an outdated social order. This requires that the current order be pushed to its limits through policy change, through the enactment of just legislation, and through measures to close the gaps of extreme inequalities. However, these changes, though necessary, will prove insufficient in bringing about the new patterns of life that will allow all people to thrive. Given that many of the systems and structures of society were designed precisely to reinforce domination and inequality, significant resources must also be channelled towards learning about effective models of governance, education, and economics structured around an entirely new set of principles: that human beings are one, that women and men are equal, that the emergent powers of the collective can be released through cooperation and reciprocity, and that humanity's progress will be greatly bolstered by the full participation of all people in creating the world anew.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Inc., a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18978 (E) 191118

Please recycle

Statement

The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Inc. invests in grassroots initiatives driven by women and girls in developing economies that sustainably advance their lives. Through flexible funding, we support economic development and empowerment of women and girls, while accompanying our grantee partners on their journey towards sustainability and greater impact. Over half of our grantee partners historically have focused on economic development and empowerment of women and girls.

It is evident to us from our grant making experience spanning over 49 years, funding nearly 700 projects in 94 countries and reaching more than one million women and girls, that gender equality, women's economic empowerment and social protection are intrinsically linked. Without effective social protection policies and programs in place to address the risks and vulnerabilities specific to women, especially marginalized women in both urban and rural communities, achieving gender equality will remain unattainable. Social protection programs are crucial to women's economic empowerment as it gives them the ability to access labour markets, address risks faced by working families during times of economic down turns and natural disasters and meet the basic needs of poor families.

More than half a billion women have joined the world's work force over the past 30 years, yet the systems and policies in place fall short of providing the necessary support they need to gain the skill sets and education to advance in their careers in a safe and decent work environment, while fulfilling the responsibilities of unpaid care work as care takers of their children and elderly family members. Women in rural communities face the added disadvantage of working in the informal sector and not benefiting from the contributory schemes available in the formal sector. They comprise 43 per cent of the world's agriculture labour force and are the backbone of development in their economies yet do not have control over land and productive services, are not able to generate enough income from their agricultural production to fund the education and health care needs for themselves and their families or save sufficient financial resources for future needs or to grow their micro enterprises.

It is important to reiterate here that the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development includes a strong commitment to "deliver social protection and essential public services for all" and "eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere". Toward that end, Member States agreed to "provide fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems, including floors" that focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized among us (Addis Ababa Action Agenda, paragraph 12). Coverage gaps in social protection due to lack of financial resources available to national governments is frequently identified as an impediment to providing Universal Social Protection, including floors. Financial resources are definitely available, provided there is the political will to put in place efficient administrative systems with checks and balances to increase domestic tax revenues by curtailing tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax fraud and illicit financial flows as well as transition to a system of progressive taxation.

Ensuring women have equal access to public services and sustainable infrastructure would increase job opportunities, close the gender pay gap, and reduce barriers that hold women back from reaching their full potential due to discriminatory laws and unfair share of caring for the family. Governments are responsible for providing access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for all of their citizens, including women and girls. Yet, many of the governments of countries, where we fund grants, face allegations of public corruption, lack of financial resources, and sometimes conflict, which reduces their ability to deliver on these

responsibilities. Our grantees — grassroots women-led organizations — often fill gaps in their communities (either where services are completely lacking, or where they fail to appropriately reach women and girls). Governments should be engaging directly with grassroots women's groups, who are already finding solutions to these issues in their communities, to make timely and targeted interventions and collaborate on programs to improve access.

Our grantee in Kenya, Community Mobilization for Positive Empowerment, is working to ensure safe water access in West Uyoma shared, "When women don't have clean water, they are limited in what they can do to empower themselves or their communities. The amount of time that is lost walking to get water, or being sick from dirty water, or caring for children who are sick from dirty water — all of this time adds up and it keeps women from attending community meetings, opening business, seeking leadership roles, and more." For many of the women and girls we support, poor infrastructure means that they are spending inordinate time on unpaid work like fetching water, firewood, and walking long distances on foot to access basic necessities. They have less time for income generating activities and continuing education, which, in turn, perpetuates poverty and exclusion.

In light of the above, on behalf of our grantees, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Inc. makes the following recommendations to advance social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure:

- As contributory schemes only benefit women in the formal sector and not those in the informal sector, a sector with a higher concentration of female employment, incidence of unemployment, and poverty, government guarantees of Universal Social Protection, including floors would ensure that the most marginalized do not get left behind.
- Additionally, it is important to expand Universal Social Protection coverage to benefit those who fall outside the agreed upon definitions of "universal", such as refugees, migrants and the stateless.
- Social protection administration systems should be simplified and designed in such a manner that those in rural communities do not have to complete complex processes and forms to receive cash transfers.
- Expand financial inclusion strategies, such as mobile banking, to all rural communities so that women in these communities do not have to travel far and stand in long lines to collect cash transfers. Provide financial literacy and numeracy training to ensure women have the necessary skill sets to manage their finances.
- Many women in rural communities and their children may not meet the conditions of social protection schemes (such as when a disabled child is unable to attend school, a condition of receiving the cash transfer). With the premise that social protection is a human right and that women in rural communities have the same rights as everyone else to thrive, options for non-conditional transfers should be considered.
- Ensure that austerity measures that are taken after a crisis do not impact social security spending, as the protection is essential for people to survive the aftermaths.
- Ensure that social protection system administrators not only have the capacity and the skill sets to collect reliable gender disaggregated data to make targeted interventions, but also receive sensitivity trainings to treat recipients with respect.

- Adequate levels of social protection schemes across the life cycle is important to address the situations that arise at every stage of life.
- While private sector financing is used to fund public goods through Public Private Partnerships, national government's role and ability to monitor and evaluate the projects on behalf of its citizens should not get diluted.
- Gender dimensions and location must be taken into account when designing infrastructure projects to ensure women who carry heavy loads of goods for sale can easily access those services to free up time for economic activity and are safe while using these services any time of the day.
- Move away from gender stereotyped job recruitment by implementing infrastructure work and training opportunities for women as both skilled and semi-skilled workers, while ensuring that, in this male-dominated industry, women feel safe from sexual harassment and gender-based violence and discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes.
- In developing infrastructure designs, it is key to identify women's infrastructure needs in consultation with them and include them in decision making roles.

In conclusion, we have an opportunity to make transformational change in the lives of women and girls everywhere. It is time for Governments to act more effectively by taking a gendered approach to filling the gaps in social protection systems, public services, and sustainable infrastructure.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by World Youth Alliance, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18979 (E) 191118

Please recycle

Statement

World Youth Alliance is a global coalition of young people dedicated to the promotion and protection of human dignity and building solidarity between young people of developing and developed countries.

We affirm that all human beings are equal in dignity and therefore deserve respect, opportunity, and the freedom to use their abilities and talents. Access to public services like education and health, along with respect for women's unique capacities and gifts, are essential to ensure equality and empowerment of women in all aspects of their lives. This is essential in combating systems and practices that limit women and girls' ability to fully participate in society, reducing poverty rates, undernourishment that affects overall health and unemployment in the society.

Education, a key public service has instrumental and intrinsic value for individuals and societies. It provides individuals in society with essential knowledge necessary for development. Education promotes gender and class equality by creating job opportunities among men and women. Education also provides a foundation for improved standards of living and greater earning potential, generates skilled personnel for industry and economic growth, better access to other services, and better health-care systems that are crucial for women and girls' welfare.

Education that fosters personal development provides a strong basis for personal and professional achievement. Teaching children about the dignity of the human person will help build a generation of women and men who recognize women and girls' intrinsic value and gifts.

World Youth Alliance has developed a curriculum that promotes respect, responsible behaviour, and equality between women and men. The Human Dignity Curriculum teaches children about human dignity: that every human being has it and should therefore be respected. The program is culturally sensitive and encourages parental involvement. Students who understand human dignity are prepared to make responsible personal decisions and to contribute to their communities and to treat others with respect in their families, peer groups, and communities, including in their personal relationships.

The Human Dignity Curriculum also has a sexuality education extension which teaches age-appropriate, biologically accurate information. It focuses on personal development and informed decisions related to students' sexuality based on an understanding of themselves, and with respect for their own human dignity and the dignity of others. This can help girls and boys form healthy, respectful relationships and resist peer pressure, thus decreasing social risk taking. It promotes gender equality among men and women, for both are born free and equal in dignity.

Women play a central role in their families and societies. Women and girls have equal capacities with men and boys to learn, create, and innovate. They also possess the unique capability to become pregnant and have children. Many, particularly in developing countries, do so without adequate information and medical support, which leads to approximately 800 maternal deaths each day. Each one is both emotionally devastating to loved ones and represents a loss to the community of the woman's creativity, talents, and productivity.

The maternal health of women and girls during pregnancy is vital to her overall health and well-being. During pregnancy, women's immune systems are depressed and women are susceptible to preventable cases of maternal death such as sepsis, haemorrhage, hypertension, and obstructed labour. To address these, women must have access to maternal health care, including prenatal and post-natal health care and emergency obstetric care, key elements of public services for health. The most

efficient way to do this is to ensure increase the number of skilled birth attendants. UNFPA states that three-fourths of all maternal deaths could be averted by the presence of skilled birth attendants Furthermore, better infrastructure, more hospitals and cleaner health-care facilities will reduce maternal mortality. This will save many women's lives, ensuring that they can play an essential part in the development of their communities. Practices such as abortion violate the dignity of mother and child and fail to address the root causes of maternal mortality and therefore should not be promoted as part of public services.

In order to address women's health needs we should also prioritize research and health care for non-communicable diseases, which are among the leading causes of death for women. One particular area of non-communicable disease that has been under-researched is reproductive health.

The endocrine system is closely linked to women's overall health, yet many women do not know what a healthy cycle looks like or when they need medical assistance. Moreover, many doctors cannot accurately diagnose these conditions or go beyond symptom management to treat the root causes. Many women experience symptoms on a regular basis but do not understand that they could benefit from treatment. Some of these symptoms can significantly impact women's enjoyment of their lives and ability to achieve their goals.

Women's knowledge about their health plays an important role in their empowerment. When a woman understands her cycle, she gains a window into her overall health. Knowledge empowers like nothing else can; it makes women informed participants in their health care able to make informed choices about reproductive health goals, achieve desired family size, and meet other long-term health goals. Knowledge-based health care will therefore help to empower women and girls in the society in achieving their goals and contribute to their society, economy and drive improvements in health-care infrastructure.

Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 10 stress the importance of gender equality and reduction of inequalities in society. Equal access to resources and capital by both men and women are crucial to societal and economic development. Both men and women are part of the society and as such, both must be included in all social and economic spheres of their communities.

Women have contributed to society both socially and economically throughout history, although their contributions have not always received recognition. These include both formal employment and unpaid care work, through such activities as educators and caregivers in the home, as participants in family businesses, and as workers and entrepreneurs in a variety of fields. In much of history, and in many places around the world today, women have lacked equal access to key forms of capital which enable success. When we ensure that women and girls have the same opportunities and access as men and boys, in all spheres of life, we empower them to drive their own success and active contributors to development in their communities. By promoting policies which value all of women's and girls' gifts and unique capacities, we enable them to be drivers of development in their communities.

There are seven forms of capital people need access to: natural endowments such as location, subsoil assets, forests, beaches, and climate; the financial resources of a nation, such as savings and international reserves; humanly made capital, such as buildings, bridges, roads, and telecommunications assets; institutional capital, such as legal protections of tangible and intangible property, efficient government departments, and firms that maximize value to shareholders and compensate and train workers; knowledge resources, such as international patents, and university and think tank capacities; human capital, which represents skills, insights and capabilities; and culture capital, which means not only the explicit articulations of culture like music,

language, and ritualistic tradition, but also attitudes and values that are linked to innovation.

Public services and social protection systems empower women and girls the most when they ensure they have the tools they need to use their abilities in the ways they want to. Women and girls who are healthy and educated can only go so far if they lack, due to law or practice, the ability to access the resources of their society. When we create equal access to the various forms of capital and ensure women and girls have the tools they need to use it, we are equipping the next generation of female scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, business owners, and social innovators.

World Youth Alliance stresses that efforts should focus on promoting education and health for all, for we all have equal dignity. We recognize that health and education foster human creativity and ingenuity, facilitating gender equality and empowerment grounded in the dignity of the human person. When women have equal access to all forms of capital as men and boys in order to ensure authentic development.

World Youth Alliance calls upon the Commission to promote social protection schemes, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure that is grounded in human dignity in order to achieve gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and authentic development.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/15

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Women Organization for Development and Capacity Building, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18980 (E) 121118

Please recycle

Statement

Women Development and Capacity Building is non-profit organization established, 2004. Women Development and Capacity Building is concerned with issues that face women and children in the humanitarian and development settings. Women Development and Capacity Building is a member of inter-agency coordination mechanism in Sudan and actively participates in the following humanitarian sectors; Protection sector, gender base violence sub-sector, Child Protection sub sector, Education and other sectors. Women Development and Capacity Building has sub- offices in Kassala, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Central Darfur States. Since 2004, Women Development and Capacity Building has been working to build the capacities of women's groups, advocating for a change and empowering women to gain their rights, and have a better life. Moreover, Women Development and Capacity Building is working to address the challenges facing women groups in conflict settings. Women Development and Capacity Building's overall strategy is to support efforts towards realization of sustainable development goals with focus on women and girls. Women Development and Capacity Building is an active member within the protection working group, wash working group, national organization networks, chairing the national committee for ending gender base violence. Women Development and Capacity Building has participated in the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York (53- 57- 58- 60-61- 62).

Within the framework of social protection, Women Development and Capacity Building is a member of the network of organizations working in poverty reduction. The organization participated in the formation of the network and the approval of its main system. The organization has carried out awareness workshops in the field of production and increased productivity, management and marketing of small businesses.

Women Development and Capacity Building has also worked on a number of legal protection activities for those affected by the problems of tribal conflict by providing lawyers and defence bodies to affected women as well as protection against the effects of all kinds of violence.

Contribution of the Women Development and Capacity Building Organization in Social Protection

One of the Organization's top priorities in economic empowerment is the achievement of the goals of sustainable development. Therefore, Women Development and Capacity Building mobilizes the productive capacities of women to achieve the first goal: No poverty, the second goal: Zero hunger, goal 8: Decent work and economic growth, goal 12: responsible consumption and production and goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the goal. Women Development and Capacity Building has implemented several projects to achieve the first, second and eighth goals through small activities (domestic agriculture - animal production - food processing - knitting and embroidery - and ownership of production tools, benefited 15386 women. Food Security and Livelihoods and Job labour opportunities, beneficiary Number (9000 women). Distribution of food and school meals, number of beneficiaries (151137 women and 216320 Child). Formation of women's associations for rural savings and loan, the total beneficiaries (7370 women) in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

To achieve goal 12 through:

- Training programs to raise the capacity of women.
- Assessing the climate that enables women in agricultural projects to select suitable sites for growth and quality of crops.

- Increase women's awareness of labor rights and laws so that they can join unions and claim their rights.
- Marketing production to increase income and encourage production to improve living conditions.

To achieve Goal 17, Women Development and Capacity Building has been implementing these projects through partnerships with Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations, World Food Program, the Sudanese Humanitarian Funding Program, the Practical Action Fund and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. All this effort is facing local and global challenges in light of the international labour changes and some of these challenges are:

- Political changes and their impact on countries and the impact of local, regional and global economy.
- Conflicts within countries and wars between countries and their negative impact on the economy due to instability.
- Climate and environmental change and its impact on agriculture and livestock.

However, these local and global challenges we attempt to overcome most of them and we succeeded in achieving a development among women in the economic aspect, raising the level of income for families and achieved family stability and peaceful coexistence in those areas.

Challenges:

In spite of the various activities provided by civil society organizations during the previous period with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Mission in Sudan with its various departments, as well as the support of various international organizations and countries in the implementation of training programs on various human rights issues, reports stated that shortage of trained cadres remain a major challenge for Sudan.

The international community focus on civil and political rights in countries leads to a lack of attention to economic, social and cultural rights. Organizations have failed to play their full role in the promotion and protection of economic rights, which necessitates changing this pattern of behaviour by the international community.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/16

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by American Association of University Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-18982 (E) 121118

Please recycle

Statement

The American Association of University Women supports the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; the priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session).

The American Association of University Women, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization, advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. With more than 170,000 global members and supporters, as well as 1,000 branches and 800 college and university partners, the Association promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; reduction of poverty; a living wage; quality, affordable dependent care; paid family and medical leave; safe, liveable, and affordable housing; quality, affordable, and accessible health care, including reproductive health care; and a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. We support a Social Security system that provides inflation-protected, guaranteed lifetime benefits with a progressive benefit formula, spousal and widow benefits, and disability and survivor benefits.

In fact, the Association adopted a robust new strategic plan and vision, focused on education and training, economic security, and leadership for women and girls to thrive. Economic development efforts to reach gender equality and sustainable development can only succeed if women are part of the solution. Doing so yields a double impact: when women are economically empowered, families are healthier, better educated, and communities thrive. We reaffirm our support of Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its comprehensive and human rights-focused set of universal Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the interdependence of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

We support UN-Women's efforts and advocacy to achieve Planet 50-50 by 2030 and UN-Women's call for United Nations' bodies and Member States to Step It Up for Gender Equality. The Association also reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other United Nations outcome documents have provided a firm foundation for sustainable development and we applaud the commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

We support the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social, and environmental — and recognize that sustainable development cannot be achieved without gender equality and that all Member states and entities must take significant and decisive action to end the persistent global gender gaps and reach gender equality by 2030.

As stated in the Association's 2017–19 Public Policy Program, the Association believes: Global interdependence requires national and international policies against human trafficking and that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. We support the civil and human rights of all immigrants, including a fair and just path to legal status. We support a strengthened United Nations and its affiliated agencies. We advocate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women and subsequent declarations. We affirm our active participation in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and our commitment to ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Association's commitment to women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session) can be found in both its mission statement, to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy, and its vision statement, equity for all. We support the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's stated Agreed Conclusions (E/2016/27) that urges stakeholders, nations, and other entities to take action in the following five areas:

- Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks;
- Fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- Strengthening women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development;
- Strengthening gender-responsive data collection and follow-up and review processes;
- Enhancing national institutional arrangements.

The Association advocates for policies for all women to achieve economic self-sufficiency and, through our research and educational programs, offers specific strategies and actions that are proven to advance women's economic security. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2017, the pay gap is widening, despite multiple interventions to topple inequities and force salary disclosure. Women are half the world's workforce and women's economic empowerment and their ability to create economic change are proven components in achieving gender equality.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 calls for fiscal, wage and social protection policies to progressively achieve greater equality. To enhance social protections and achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women, the Association advocates for:

- Pay equity and fairness in compensation and benefits at every socioeconomic level and in every industry;
- Equitable access and advancement in employment, including vigorous enforcement of employment anti-discrimination statutes;
- Greater availability of and access to a high standard of benefits and policies that promote work-life balance, including quality and affordable dependent care;
- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce, including non-traditional occupations and women's entrepreneurship;
- Strengthening programs, including welfare and career and technical education, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential;
- Strengthening retirement benefits and programs, including pension improvements and protecting Social Security from privatization.

The American Association of University Women urges Member States to take action through legislation and investment with timetable driven metrics and quantitative measures to ensure equal opportunities and rights in all aspects of life — legal, environmental, social protections — and the support, training, and human and civil rights needed to achieve equity for all.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/17

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Women's Board Educational Cooperation Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

18-18983 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

Women Empowerment: the link to Sustainable Development

The contribution of women who make more than half the human population cannot be overlooked if we are to achieve sustainable development. The more we empower women of all ages and social backgrounds the more likely we are to attain the development goals by the stipulated year of 2030.

Women empowerment cannot take place without education. The population of women who are meaningfully empowered is dependent on the population that have access to quality education, starting with basic education. In Nigeria, the quality of basic education provided in public funded schools is abysmal. The situation is even worse in rural areas where it is almost non-existent. Very few women from these rural areas are able to defy the odds and scale through to obtaining a higher education or sufficient education for notable empowerment. In the course of our work, we have observed that lack of quality basic education is the major obstacle to empowering women. With quality basic education, training is carried out faster and with more depth.

More than 573 million women and girls worldwide are illiterate, and this is a big setback to sustainable development. Women earnings will grow by 10-20 per cent for every year of school each woman is able to complete. In Nigeria, ensuring that girls spend more years in school is a big issue especially in the north east where girls' schools remain closed after terrorist attacks of Boko haram. Even for those who are still in school the issue of their safety needs to be addressed sufficiently. Recently, some private schools in the western part of the country were attacked and some of their students kidnapped. The social protection of these girls has to be addressed if they are to remain in a formal setting to receive the necessary education which will empower them.

Another aspect of education which should be explored for women empowerment and attainment of the sustainable development goals is informal education. There is a high reliance on different categories of certification which is a result of formal education. Skills acquired informally if recognised will go a long way to empower women and make their contribution to sustainable development recognized and appreciated. This is imperative, considering that most poor women cannot work their way out of poverty except in an informal sector. The average earnings of these women are low, as they are not receiving the full benefit of their contribution to the economy and society.

Informal economy contributes greatly to the economy and in Nigeria this has been estimated at about 7.61trillion Naira. It is sad to note that despite this huge amount of contribution the majority of the people working in this sector live in squalor and their contribution remain largely unvalued, unrecognised and hardly taken into account both in urban and rural planning. If we are to achieve sustainable development without leaving anyone behind, then it is imperative that informal workers who are the working poor, need to be recognised, valued and supported as economic agents who contribute greatly to the growth and development in the society.

The role of government cannot be over emphasised when it comes to recognition of informal sector. Government should declare a state of emergency when it comes to women education and empowerment especially for those women that are poor and need to acquire skills in order to increase their employability. Government and civil society should organise massive training towards skills acquisition.

In the course of our work in the field of vocational training we have seen how the income of a young girl redefines the livelihood of an entire household. With the little earned by such a girl, the family is able to feed and even train some of their members.

The major challenge to achieving even greater height to women empowerment is a lack of proper recognition of informal and semi-formal training. Once there is no recognition there are no proper guidelines both for remuneration and ensuring that certain standards are met.

Take for instance in the field of hospitality a girl who does not have a formal qualification from a higher institution may be more skilled than a person with formal education in the same field with a certification from a higher institution. But because our economy is orientated towards certificate obtained though formal education rather than competency in skills required for the job, the person with the skill is more recognized and remunerated more than the other. There is nothing wrong with getting a degree from a university, but many times, such degrees are theory based with little hands on practical experience. Unfortunately, since only a formal education degree is well valued and recognised, it happens most times that a woman with informal training could earn thrice lower even in spite of higher skill knowledge than the person with formal education in the same field.

The Nigerian Government has recently taken steps towards the recognition of informal training by the introduction of the National Skill Qualification Framework. With the National Skill Qualification Framework, the worker is able to acquire certification for competency at any level through formal, semi-formal or informal learning. Nigeria has only recently joined many other countries that already have an existing framework or are in the process of implementing the framework. The system is a framework which enables the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies acquired by individuals, irrespective of where and how the training or skill was acquired.

Apart from the proper recognition of skills of poor workers, the system also encourages continuous learning since it gives a clear statement of what the learner must know or be able to do whether the learning takes place in a classroom or on-the-job. The framework indicates the comparability of different qualifications and how one can progress from one level to another. The skills recognition through the National Skill Qualification Framework is a fantastic way of empowering women because it helps the poor (majority of who are women) gain an up-to-date Nationally Recognised Qualification.

We find it highly necessary for the government to push for greater recognition of informal education in order for the contribution made by the informal sector, especially the women who make up a majority of the people in the sector to be recognized and appreciated.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/18

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Center for Global Nonkilling, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

18-15964 (E) 141118

Please recycle

Statement

Gender inequality in any sector is a clear threat for women's and girls' well-being everywhere. Barriers on accessing public services and discriminations under social protection systems are decreasing women's possibilities for safe and valuable lives, undermining the path set by the Global Goals, and particularly targets related to the elimination of violence against women and girls (5.2, 5.3, 16.1 and 16.2). These barriers not only create a psychological, social and economic stress for women, but can lead to killing.

The Center for Global Nonkilling has argued in previous statements (E/CN.6/2015/NGO/21, E/CN.6/2016/NGO/7 and E/CN.6/2018/NGO/8) how the Sustainable Development Goals present an opportunity for collectively addressing risk and protective factors that can combined to prevent and decrease violence against women. The development of these protective factors and the reduction of associated risk facts usually falls within the scope of social protection systems.

The eradication of poverty through appropriate social protection systems, the achievement of universal health coverage and addressing mental health and substance abuse, the access to quality early childhood development and nonviolent learning environments, the development of social protection policies that achieve greater equality and inclusion and ensuring access to safe housing and basic services as part of inclusive urbanization, are instrumental to reducing violence and must include a sharp gender-responsive approach.

Gender-responsive social protection should be created together with women. Without women on a decision-making levels, the policies may on their best become gender-sensitive yet not-responsive. Women often suffer from the consequences of unequal social protection, which is why they recognize the problems and pitfalls of these policies, particularly in violence-ridden communities. Only with the active involvement of women, will these issues and perspectives be brought into discussion, giving governments both chance and pressure to change toward social protection policies more suitable and effective for all genders.

Social protection systems are built to prevent, manage, and overcome situations that adversely affect people's well-being, but very often fail to address violence and its risk and protective factors as a major social problem. This was acknowledged by the World Health Assembly in its 2014 Resolution on Strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls and against children (WHA67/2014/REC/1). By reducing poverty and vulnerability, by creating a safety net for people when they face economic or social risks, and by providing basic services in health, education and housing, social protection is also a powerful tool to prevent violence.

But to be effective, such systems should be equal to all. Yet they often fail to notice concrete needs that women have. Women face poverty more than men and women are more often than men in vulnerable positions due to the conflicts or gender inequality issues, leading them to vulnerable positions because of inefficient social protection system. These situations must be bluntly acknowledged as part of the structural violence against women.

Addressing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment through the provision of social protection is a basic human rights issue. While the world has become more globalized, women's poverty, oppression and exploitation have all increased. Gender-responsive social protection can address the challenge of the structural violence that women and girls are exposed to. Patriarchy sustains structural, physical and psychological violence by maintaining gender inequalities but can also

be curtailed through gender-responsive social protection. Some effective policies that require gender-specific resolutions are women's participation in politics and decision making, education and career support, work safety, and health programs. Evidence-based interventions that focus on challenging social norms and attitudes that sustain patriarchal values and legitimize violence against women and girls have also been tested.

Although globally most victims and perpetrators of lethal violence are men, women and girls are severely affected by other forms of violence. One in three women worldwide has suffered sexual violence by an intimate partner, and out of these 40–50 per cent of women have experienced sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work. In addition, a raising number of women who have reported or complained about the harassment have experienced victimization. Social protection must address this reality by providing judicial advice and help when filing a formal report or complain at home, work, or other settings, and by offering health support to care for physical and psychological traumas caused by violence. Social protection must also develop a strong social sensitization component to take sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women seriously and by emphasizing the importance of accountability (i.e., the global #MeToo campaign).

Social protection must also provide women a way out of abusive relationships by providing safe places to live and recover or build financial independence and nurture their children, while also investing in girls' education will double their eventual earnings, end child marriage, decrease fertility rates, enhance women's bargaining power in the household and overall strengthen institutions. In many countries, women still face a systematic denial of information and services of sexual and reproductive health, such as affordable access to modern methods of contraception. Unfortunately, this leads to unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, unnecessary and preventable maternal deaths and to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Thus, lives and health of women are put in risk as they are those who need to carry the consequences of these policies, even though the same rules apply to men. Social protection has a good chance on preventing these health issues, preventing unnecessary human suffering and public expenditure. In addition, when social protection is accessible and affordable for all, it can ensure critical health services especially to poor women, who are easily dropped out of the health care system due to financial issues.

By including gender-responsive factors in their social protection, governments can make significant differences in addressing violence against women and girls, but also encourage women's participation in decision-making and improving living conditions in many countries. Empowering women through social protection does not affect women themselves but also the general population through positive effects and impacts on families, communities and societies at large. Gender equality is the key to unlocking many positive developmental results including the significant reduction of homicide and other forms of violence everywhere and is crucially required to achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals as a whole. For gender equality to be attained, there is a pressing need for the provision of social protection services that have the potential to empower women and prevent violence.

Considering the importance of early childhood development for preventing violence, social protection can engage in long term change by supporting both maternal and paternal paid leaves giving everyone an equal opportunity for starting a family despite one's economic or social situation. Often, it is women who carry out most domestic work having significantly more unpaid work hours than men. Women are also spending more time taking care of the children and elder, which is often not socially valued and does not allow for social benefits in later life. Too often this is a

dependence situations that in cases provide no options to escape from situations of violence. Social protection can play an enormous role in supporting women accessing or reintegrating back to work, gaining financial independence, as well as encouraging men to share their part of raising a family.

The Center for Global Nonkilling encourages all member states and the United Nations system, together with national and local governments to clearly include gender-responsive factors in their budgeting of social protection and violence prevention programs and institutions in order to empower women in participating decision-making and politics; building a career and ensuring an education; attaining work safety; and, having equal access to health services. There are still several inequalities in all these factors, preventing women to live their lives on full potential and health. These social protection initiatives provide opportunities to promote gender equality, fight patriarchy and address historical imbalances that keep women oppressed.

United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by WOOMB International Ltd, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

Please recycle

Statement

The global affiliates of WOOMB International (World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings) function as localized social protection systems for women and girls in their cohesive ability to support them with comprehensive fertility education and sexual health management through the Billings Ovulation Method® of natural fertility regulation. By doing so, they address unique challenges encountered by women and girls with the provision of specific strategies contingent within the Billings Ovulation Method® to assist in alleviating conditions of poverty in the absence of personal health initiatives. These microcosms provide sustainable advances towards the eradication of those conditions by ensuring all women and girls receive the necessary aids for the enhancement of their sexual and fertility health.

As the health and well-being of women and girls improve across the continents, their empowerment provides the foundational building blocks towards a richer and stronger future. Both within developing countries and developed countries, women and girls benefit from a keen understanding of fertility knowledge in the Billings Ovulation Method® which enables them to assert the direction of their reproductive sexual health priorities. This protective mechanism functions as a safety net for them, ensuring the necessary dialogue surrounding individual independence and fertility growth.

Through the independence gained from the implementation of the strategies present within the Billings Ovulation Method®, women and girls are more readily able to enter into and continue with gainful employment or pursue higher education while choosing when to plan for increases in their family size. Furthermore, they are recognized in the market place as valuable contributors to economic and socio-economic growth. Productive labour market policies throughout the world encourage gender equality and appropriate proportionate representation in the work force and academic institutions.

With the knowledge of the Billings Ovulation Method® afforded to women and girls through fertility awareness and educational instruction, great care is given to ensure their fertility and sexual health remain intact. They benefit from the ability to recognize their fertile characteristics as this can assist in early detection of potential health risks to themselves, and aids in their further prevention. Global affiliates of WOOMB International function as their own micro-cosmic social protection systems to ensure that the strategies of the Billings Ovulation Method® are authentically and correctly imparted to women and girls in their own communities.

The Billings Ovulation Method® is also a micro-cosmic social protection system with its comprehensive strategies imbedded within its methodology. Being easy to learn, simple to use and applicable to all women and girls while adaptable to all climates, cultures and environments without the need for exterior apparatuses, it exacts little to no cost to them or their socio-economic conditions. As a public service, fertility health and education is accessible to all women and girls throughout the world.

WOOMB International has proven its sustainability to transmit this knowledge of fertility health and regulation through the Billings Ovulation Method® across the globe, woman to woman, since 1978. With affiliates in several countries on all continents, it continues to positively affect the sexual health of women and girls everywhere and fertility growth within declining populations. Its translucent ability to provide natural fertility regulation warrants further success within positive strategies towards the sustainable development goals of 2030.